1	2	3
5.	Upgradation of Website, production of CD-ROMs and VCDs	20.00
6.	GOI-UNDP Endogenous Tourism Project at village Naggar in Kullu Distt.	20.00
7.	Tourist Reception Centre near Chauri Bihal, Manali	24.00

Promotion of domestic tourist circuits

933. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the year 2004 nearly 3.21 million foreign tourists visited India generating Rs. 21,828 crores in foreign exchange, while 5.5 million Indian tourists went abroad leading to an outflow of foreign exchange of Rs. 72,600 crores, thereby neutralising the foreign exchange earnings from tourism, as the Indian tourist, reportedly, finds visiting neighbouring countries locales of tourists interests cheaper than the Indian resorts; and

(b) if so, the details of fresh initiatives being taken to make the domestic tourism also cheaper and attractive to persuade the Indian tourists to explore the domestic circuit as well?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) An estimated 3.37 million foreign tourists arrived in India during 2004, and foreign exchange earnings were Rs. 21,828 crore. During the year, 6.2 million Indians went abroad and Travel payments, as compiled by the Reserve Bank of India, were Rs. 22,988 crore. There are various reasons for more Indians going abroad, like fascination for foreign locations; prestige involved in visiting foreign countries; visiting friends and relatives settled in countries like UK, USA, Singapore, Bahrain, Oman, UAE, etc.; cheap/concessional air fares to some foreign locations like South-East, compared to Indian destinations; cheap hotel tariff; etc.

(b) A number of steps have been taken by the Government to boost domestic tourism like, improving the tourist infrastructure at important

destinations/circuits, focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure, particularly budget hotels, improving road infrastructure to major tourist destinations, creation of world class collaterals, use of internet and web marketing, generating tourist publications, etc., as a result domestic tourist visits to States have increased from 270 million in 2002 to 309 million in 2003 (growth of 14.6%), and to 367 million in 2004 (growth of 18.8%).

Assistance to backward States under AIBP

t934. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal regarding amendment in the parameters for providing assistance to the backward States under Accelerated irrigation benefit Programme (AIBP) is under consideration of Government;

(b) whether different parameters have been set up for the States situated in plains and hill State for providing Central assistance to them; and

(c) whether Government will ensure that there would be no discrimination between the parameters adopted for providing assistance to the backward States like Madhya Pradesh and the hill States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The proposal for relaxation in criteria of the Accelerated Irrigation benefits Programme (AIBP) was approved by the Cabinet during March, 2005 and the modified guidelines of the programme have already been issued. These guidelines have come into force with effect from 1 st April, 2005.

(b) and (c) The Central Assistance will be provided in the form of 70% loan (to be raised by the State) and 30% grant for Non-Special Category States and 10% loan (to be raised by the State) and 90% grant for special Category States, namely, the seven North-Eastern States, the States of Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttaranchal and Koraput, Bolangirand Kalahandi districts of Orissa. The revised guidelines also provide that drought-prone areas, tribal areas and flood prone areas in the country, to be identified in consultation with the Planning Commission shall be treated at part with special Category States for funding under AIBP.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.